

Nuggets of News



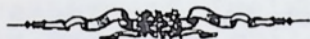
P.O. Box 26
Gold Hill, Ore.

March 1991

NOTICE THE NEW NAME OF THE NEWSLETTER?

We have been trying to get a logo for the last three years! Lucky for us, Ted Wharton volunteered to be the logo chairman. Ted recruited his friend Art Goss to help him combine three of our ideas. Art spent considerable time drawing us variations of the theme. At January's meeting, we voted to accept the one above. We sure hope you like our new logo!.

We honored Art with an "Honorary Membership" for his work. Thank You Mr. Art Goss and Mr. Ted Wharton.



We had a busy December, featuring a calendar, cookbook and newsletter sale on the 8th. Winona Nichols, Linda Genaw, Gene Heil, Mary Bradish, Crayetta Armstrong and Alyce Bottleson all took a turn at sitting in the freezing cold in front of D'Angelo's Pizza Parlor. It was all worth while because we earned \$138.50.

The following day A-1 Landclearing started demolishing the PP & L building on our lot. They let us have 1500 bricks as a way of recouping some of the cost of cleaning the lot for sale.

The man doing the work let us know that people were starting to walk off with bricks. In order to make sure we got our 1500 bricks, we rounded up a few neighborhood boys and put them to work helping us, as there weren't enough younger members available to do the job. The average age of the adults was 72!

The bricks are now stored at Linda Genaw's house ready to be cleaned. They will sell for \$1.00 each for souvenirs or 75 cent each in lots of 100 or more.

The move was made on December

9th. It was a cold, blustery rainy, snowy day!!!!

The following were there to help and need a big Thank You! Gene Heil, supervisor/ rain goddess/ umbrella holder; Edith Malone, laborer; Winona Nichols, Chief Medic; Ken Nichols, senior brick-picker-upper; Alyce Bottleson, chuck-wagon master; Crayetta Armstrong, junior brick-picker-upper; Linda Genaw, master truckdriver and Reg Genaw, master stacker! The boys that helped were; Ben Horner, Todd Jennings, Tom Harmon, Alex Harmon, Todd, Logan and Aric Genaw. They were (don't tell anyone) slave labor! Thank You everyone. Seniors and kids are useful!

By the way, pictures of this operation are available for sale!



Brick moving party December 9, 1991. Gene Heil with umbrella, Edith Malone and Crayetta Armstrong. Photo by Linda Genaw

We received a check from Southern Oregon Historical Society, which disperses the county historical funds. This money is to be used for our operating expenses for the fiscal year 1991-1992. Clare Moore, budget director is now working on the 1992-93 budget.

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PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

To Our Members,

1990 brings to a close a year filled with growth and success for our society. We started off the year by acquiring our first building and even though we all knew it was a temporary location, I don't think any of us expected our new building to create so much interest from within our community. Tourists and townspeople alike came to view our displays and our membership increased dramatically. More people began attending our monthly meetings and countless items were generously donated.

Many oral histories were completed and great strides have been made in archival work. Our volunteers have been generous with their time by greeting visitors, creating displays sending thank you cards, copying photographs and making refreshments for our meetings. You've also painted walls and floors, repaired sidewalks and cement floors, marched in the Gold Hill parade and sat out in the winter weather to sell cookbooks, calendars, and baked goods. You sat in the summer heat selling rummage sale items. You've spent time balancing our checkbook, planning the agenda typing the minutes, keeping the scrapbook up to date, creating flyers and organizing fund raisers. Time was made to construct flag pole brackets, write articles for the newsletter, sew old fashioned sun bonnets and proofreading articles. More time was volunteered to take and develop photographs, draw ideas for a logo, drive to and from work parties and meetings and preparation time for speeches. There were also hours spent on the telephone for one reason or another.

But our work is not finished. There will always be another project waiting to be completed. Thank you all for the good work you've helped accomplish this past year.

It is my sincere hope that 1991 will be as productive and rewarding as last year and it can be with volunteers like you!

Yours in history, Cindy Faubion

OUR NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Members,

I was duly elected to serve you as your President for the coming year. I tried my hardest to hide in the back row in the last seat, but someone found me!

I have always been a worker, like the draft horses my dad used to use. Someone else held the reins and did the guiding, and I willingly did the pulling.

Now I am in charge of the reins (which I have never done before, and it is scary!) so like a greenhorn, I hope I can plow a true straight line. Spring is here, lets put on the harnesses and get to cultivating. If we all work together and do not pull in opposite directions, we can make a straight row.

With a little help from above and lots of help from my fellow members, I know we can grow a bumper crop this year.

I hope I can be worthy and do a decent job for our society.

Sincerely

Clare Moore, President



On November 28, 1990, the Southern Oregon Historical Society's board of trustees unanimously elected our very own, Cindy Faubion, to fill the vacancy left by Ted Birdseye. Cindy is the first G.H.H.S. officer to be elected to the S.O.H.S. board. Her term as a trustee will end in June of 1992.

This should be an excellent experience for Cindy and it will most certainly add to G.H.H.S.'s knowledge pool.

Congratulations Cindy!



We have lost three members of our early pioneer families in the last three months. We lost Chavner Thompson in December, Blanche Harvey Merriman in January and Ernest Lyman in February.

All three of these people's families were early settlers to our area. They helped shape the community as we know it today.

Chavner Thompson's grand father, Thomas Chavner (Cavanaugh Kavanaugh), came to the Dardanelles in the fall of 1856. He purchased the 159 acre donation land claim of James Hawkins in 1857. In January of 1860, Tom Chavner along with four other partners discovered one of the largest quartz gold lodes in Southern Oregon, the Gold Hill Lode. Earning quite a sum of money, Chavner was then able to buy two more donation land claims. He continued to add land to his holding until he had over 1600 acres of prime farm land.

Chavner married Margaret Brennen, who was a native of Ireland, June 4, 1861. They had five children, John Lee Thomas, Michael, Peter, Mary Ann and Margaret, who was Chavner Thompson's mother. Margaret Chavner Thompson lived to be 102 years old.

Margaret Chavner married William Emmitt Thompson in Vancouver, Washington, July 23, 1906. They then moved to the Blue Ledge Mine on the Applegate, where Thompson held an interest. The Thompsons moved back to the Chavner ranch in 1907. The ranch was divided, and the Thompsons had a cottage built facing the river just north of the grand house where Margaret's sister Mary Ann lived.

The Chavner homeplace has been farmed continuously by the family for 133 years. Michael and Peter Chavner both were born in the late 1860's, and they worked on the farm until the 1940's.

Chavner Thompson said he was born December 14, 1908. (according to the 1900 census, he was born in 1909) Thompson lived on the Tom Chavner ranch all of his life except a short three week stay in Santa Clara California. Thompson later renamed the ranch, the CT Ranch.

You didn't have to be acquainted with Chavner Thompson to know he was a gentle man. Kindness and

compassion radiated from his smiling blue eyes. I only knew him for a few short years, but he made me feel like I had known him all of my life.

Chavner was an unpretentious man who lived a simple honest life. I will always remember him in his plaid flannel shirt, blue jeans, and stetson hat, with a smile on his face.



Howard Chavner Thompson

Reprinted from the Chavner Homeplace with permission from Linda Morehouse Genav

In March of 1988, Chavner Thompson agreed to let me take his oral history. I was so nervous that day, but it only took talking to Chavner for a few minutes, before he made me feel calm. He enriched my life and many that knew him, with his wit and ability to tell a story.

I was so engrossed when he was telling me how his father William E. Thompson survived a shipwreck off Cape Espenburg, Alaska, and an attack by desperados while mining in Mexico.

Thompson endured the bigotry of the Ku Klux Klan while they were active in Gold Hill, without any bitter feelings. He related a story about some of the merchants in Gold Hill boycotting his father, and how his father strapped on his gun and went to town and took care of that! He also told me how he had to walk to school, because the bus wouldn't pick him up. He said it was because he was a Catholic. Fortunately, he was with us long enough to see our society changing for the better, in the

treatment of minorities and religious sects.

Chavner Thompson was a man of high principles and one of the last of the true gentleman farmers. He will be missed greatly by many of his friends.

LMG



Blanche Harvey Merriman's mother, Matilda Morris crossed the plains in 1877 and came to Footh Creek. Her father, John Archibald Harvey, came to the Gold Hill area from California. He was a miner on Footh Creek. There he met and married Matilda, March 24, 1880.

Cora Blanche was born on the forks of Footh Creek, July 23, 1898, the youngest of seven children.

The Harveys moved into Gold Hill where Blanche attended Gold Hill School. (where city hall now stands) She went through the 8th grade here.

Blanche's father served as Gold Hill's treasurer from 1901 to 1902 and city recorder from 1903 until July of 1905 when he resigned. Harvey was elected marshall in 1906.

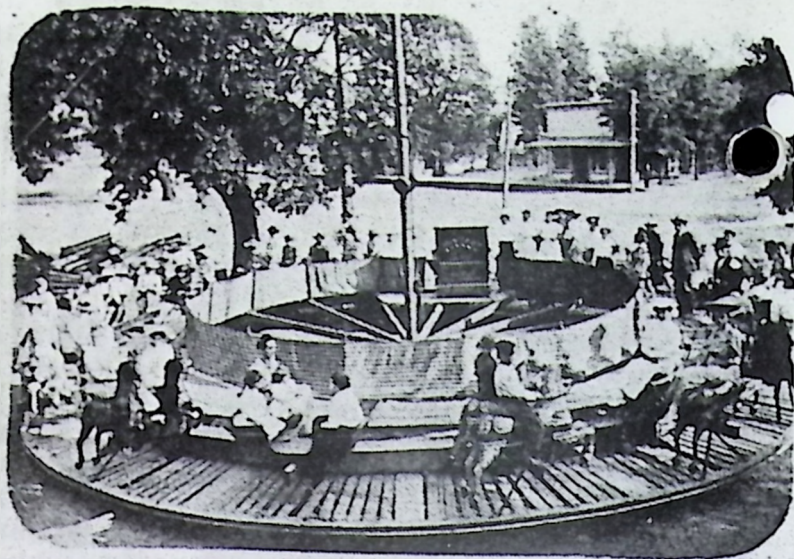
When her father got a job with the railroad, they moved to Grants Pass. Although Blanche wanted to go to high school, her father decided Blanche had enough school and she was sent out to work. She waited tables in Grants Pass.

Blanche married Merritt Merriman, who was also from pioneer stock. Merritt's father, Isaac, was the son of William and Artinecia Merriman. Isaac's wife Emma was the daughter of Merritt Bellenger. (Both of these families have roads in Medford named after them.)

After Merritt's death, Blanche again waitressed. She worked for Ruby Quackenbush at the old Dardanelles. (Now Sammy's across the freeway on Old Stage Road.) Luckily she only had to work a few months before her widow's benefits were enacted.

One of Blanche's fondest memories as a girl, was going to the carnivals at Gold Hill and riding on the merry-go-round.

The family also lived up Sardine Creek, where her dad mined at the



Merry-Go-Round in city park donated by Blanche Merriman, who is one of the children riding. GHHS # 582

Grey Eagle Mine, which has since become the House of Mystery.

Blanche lived in Jackson County all her life. She was a high spirited woman, and when necessary she was outspoken, and said exactly what was on her mind. Blanche was kind, generous, and was always willing to help anyone in need. She was a Charter Member of The Gold Hill Health Club and was active within the club until it disbanded. Blanche was also involved in the Grange. She also loved the game of baseball and was an active participant in the rooting section. Blanche was a fun loving person and will be greatly missed. She passed away January 21, 1991.

I'm sorry I never got back to get more stories from Blanche, as she was such an interesting person, and will be missed by all who knew her. She was one of my favorite people in Gold Hill. We visited her often but didn't get to do but one oral history.

Clare Moore



Ernie Lyman was not only born to a pioneer family; he was a pioneer. Ernie was one of the oldest men living in our area. He was born on the family homestead February 18 1896, weighing in at 12 pounds!

Ernie's grandmother, Caroline Fredenburg Houton, emigrated to Oregon in 1866. Her husband John was

beaten to death the second year of the Civil War, by some people who thought he was a southern sympathizer.

Caroline took her four children, Andrew, Ella, Isaac and Kate to New York where they boarded a ship heading for Oregon. Upon arrival in Oregon, they settled in Linn County. While living there, she met and married Joseph Douden (Dowden). They moved to Sams Valley in 1868 and bought out homestead rights to the farm where Ernie lived. (Ernie had copies of the homestead deed signed by President Grant.) The barn was built in 1869 and the house in 1870.

Kate Houton married George Lyman in May of 1895. George had arrived in Gold Hill the previous year. He had a saloon in Gold Hill for several years. George also had a mine in Sams Valley. In 1902, George bought a partnership with his brother-in-law Andrew in the 180 acre farm. They operated the Crescent Apple Orchard for many years. The walnut trees are on the homeplace were planted in 1901.

Ernie was a veteran of World War I. Besides working on the ranch, he worked at the Beaver Cement Plant, helped build Camp White and mined with his father.



The four remaining graduates of the class of 1915 from Gold Hill High School taken in 1987 Agnes Schumf, Vera Dietrich, Mary Truax Hendrick, and Ernie Lyman. We have lost Ernie and Mary GHHS # 55

Not only was he an outdoorsman and hunter, he was an avid mountain climber. He participated in the annual run to the beacon that used to be held in Gold Hill, during Gold Dust Day. Ernie at age 72, held the distinction of being the oldest man

to climb Mt. Shasta. He climbed Mt. Pitt (McLaughlin) 16 times as practice before he climbed Mt. Shasta in record time.

Ernie was a lifetime member of the Masonic Lodge in Central Point and the Gold Hill Odd Fellows.

Ernie kept a diary from the time he was a young man. He was a very intelligent man and could talk about anything from mining to black holes! Fellow member Beverly Ownby, who was his caregiver for the last thirteen years describes him as the kindest, gentlest, most sensible man that she has ever known.

Ernie helped me greatly in two of the projects that I was involved in and was always willing to give me information when I asked. While we were working on the Hanby nomination, we talked with Ernie, and he told us that he could remember the smell, when they fired the bricks for the building.

Many residents will surely miss seeing Ernie setting on the front porch of his old house as they pass by.
LMG



Oral Histories

As I read Blanche Merriman's oral history, I felt very badly that I never returned and talked to Blanche more about her life. Now she is gone____. I am hoping we can get in touch with more local people and record their stories on tape for prosperity, before they too are gone.

Blanche just talked about her mother and father the evening we were there. There are so many things I would like to have had her tell me about life in the early days of Gold Hill, and what it was like for her to grow up here.

Please, if anyone has time, get in touch with the GHHS and we will be glad to teach you to do oral histories.

If you are interested in reading Chavner Thompson, Ernie Lyman, Blanche Merriman's or any other oral history that we have, you as members, can check copies of them out for one week.

Clare Moore

We had so much fun at the December meeting. Our show and tell party had a great response. More members attended that meeting than any other, outside the annual picnic.

Each member was given 10 minutes to share their items of historic interest. We all enjoyed the camaraderie of sharing each others history.

Let's do this again in the near future.

You will be getting your new membership cards along with the by-laws in the near future.

This year there will be four newsletters instead of six. My business is demanding more of my time. It would be great if someone else would submit a feature for the newsletters. It is quite time consuming to research and then write a feature for each newsletter. If any of you are willing or able to submit anything for the newsletter it would be greatly appreciated.

The deadline for the next newsletter is May 21st. You can mail it to P.O. Box 26 Gold Hill, Ore. 97525 LMG

Tom Cushman and his boys passed out membership flyers around town again this year. They set an all time record this year by saturating the town in two hours!

Cindy and her sons distributed flyers up Galls Creek and will go up Hodson Road.

We printed 500 copies and need 250 more printed. Tom and Cindy will distribute them on Sardine Creek, Hwy 234, Old Stage Road and Upper River Road.

We hope that Genevieve Dahme, Armella Wharton, Gene Heil and anyone else that has been ill is on the mend.

As soon as our lot on First Avenue is finished being cleaned up, we will be putting it up for sale. The money will be put into our building fund. We have already had numerous inquiries about the lot.

We need to know who belongs to the Oregon Historical Society. It is important that we have enough members belonging to keep our affiliation. We need this affiliation to continue to receive funding from Jackson County. Please let Clare know if you belong to the O.H.S. you can call her at 855-1891. (D.C. Plumbing)

We are going to compile a book on the historical buildings in town. Tom Cushman, Winona and Ken Nichols, Clare Moore, Marge Martin and Linda Genaw are working on this project.

If you have any information or any photographs of any historic home or business please contact any one of these members. We can come right to your house and take pictures of your pictures so you don't have to worry about losing your photographs.

This will be one of our major fund raisers this year. We hope that it will promote tourism and historical interest in our community.

Fellow member Linda Annecston is now the new president of the Gold Hill Planning Commission. As president, she is also president of the Historical Board. We will be working closely with her on this project. Please help us make this a success.

Elections were held at the February meeting. The new officers are:

Clare Moore, President
Ted Wharton, Vice President
Winona Nichols, Treasurer
And Secretary is pending

Please give our new officers your support.

We have changed our by-laws. Nomination will be taken the meeting preceding the January meeting, and the elections will be held in January.

MEMBER PROFILE

By Cindy Faubion

LaRue Morris

LaRue Morris was born into this world on December 8th, 1912 in Fairbury, Illinois. His father named him after a close friend who died in a professional car race. (LaRue is French for The Street) His father John, came to the United States with his parents from Lanchespher, England at only three years of age. Lillian, his mother, born in Riverton, Illinois was of German descent.

It soon became evident that LaRue had exceptional athletic talents. He was an all state tackle and his team was the non conference champions. After completing four years of football at LaGrange High School, he was awarded the Gold Key National Scholarship. Then on the day he was to begin four years of cost free college, he called his parents to tell them he had changed his mind. Instead he would come home and train in the backyard to become the World's Fair heavyweight champion. His parents accepted the decision without one word of argument. Letting their son make his own decisions in life was a gift that did not go unappreciated by LaRue.

His decision and the determined training that consisted in part of running eight miles very day led to the realization of his hard earned dream. At the 1933 World's Fair, on a barge anchored in the lagoon of a lake he had his first match. After winning in the beginning of the second round by a technical knockout, he had become the 1933 World's Fair heavyweight amateur champion.

He went on to box for seven years, but one of the things he never got over was the day he carried a lightweight boxer who had collapsed during a fight with another man to the first aid room. He was rushed to the hospital, but he died only two hours later. LaRue remembers this as being the second boxing death at the University.

After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1937 with a bachelor of science degree in education he went to work for Western Electric. His job as a tracer required him to tour every part of a

factory to see that all the small parts were put into the finished product. He was also in charge of Western Electric's industrial recreation. But when the company began laying off men during the depression, he quit his job to spare some of the family men their jobs.

He immediately went to work for General Motors as a mechanic and eventually wound up with a job as an instructor for railroad personnel. His paid vacation, as he refers to it, involved traveling all over the United States in a 90 foot pullman car teaching the men how a diesel locomotive runs. After three years as an instructor, he became a full fledged diesel engineer. With this new position he was allowed to stay in the best hotels, eat at the finest restaurants and have an unlimited expense account.



LaRue Morris

Reprinted from At The Crossroads with permission from Linda Morehouse Genav

Then in 1941, he was a passenger on a train wreck in an Indian cornfield. After climbing out of his overturned car, he helped other passengers and the injured. He looked up to the front of the train and saw the engine still puffing smoke. Quickly he ran forward and began digging with his bare hands. In the end he pulled out two men and the engineer who had been completely buried in mud. He later received a letter of thanks from one of the men he saved. The thing LaRue remembers as miraculous is that from nine cars and a locomotive crashing, forty two people were injured, but not one

person died.

Soon afterward he left the railroad. In 1946 his family came to Oregon and settled on their Hidden Valley Ranch near Gold Hill. LaRue went on to become the millwright in a sawmill, a gold miner, a cattle rancher and finally a science teacher and football coach at Scenic Junior High in Central Point for 15 years.

Due to a lifelong hobby of collecting antiques he created what is now known as Gold Gulch in 1958. He actually quit his job as a diesel truck salesman so that he could save an old store marked for demolition in Gold Hill. He bought the store, borrowed a friend's saw and cut the building into eight foot pieces. He moved them to his ranch, hired a carpenter and the two of them put the store back together piece by piece. That old store is now standing in the heart of Gold Gulch Mining Town on Blackwell Hill. Also in the town are beautifully restored buggies, a printing press, a stage coach, a blacksmith's shop, a general store, ore cars and many other antiques with historical ties to the Rogue Valley. The main attraction at the town for all who go there always becomes the two tour guides, LaRue and Earl Morris.

During his extremely productive life, LaRue also found the time to volunteer as a coach for the Medford YMCA and serve as Santa Claus in Central Point for several years. He

seems to have more projects going than most people half his age and he continues to share his knowledge with those he meets. He was by far the best teacher I ever had, and he is truly a friend to all who know him.



Ted Wharton gave me an article from the Gold Hill News July 10, 1915 that I will take an except from in answer to the article that was in our August 1990 newsletter. The following was written by C.C. McClendon, a pioneer who settled a donation land claim on what is now known as Gilmans' dairy in Sams Valley.

"There hasn't been a Rogue here for 40 years. Uncle Jake Neathammer owned the Sleepy Hollow, that now is, where the graves was found last month. That old squaw story was this way. About a year after the Indians was taken to the Siletz, this Squaw--she was very old-- came back to Neathammer's and asked to dig for treasure she had buried. She located the spot under Neathammer's porch. He took up the boards and let her dig, and she found it. He said it was in an old iron kettle, and most all silver--maybe \$2,000 in all. These Messengers never saw a Rogue River Indian. They may have heard of this and told the story. I like to keep these things straight."

If you, or a friend would like to help us preserve the rich history of Gold Hill and the surrounding area, receive the historical society newsletter, and other fun stuff, complete the form below and return it with your \$5.00 check or money order for a Family Membership to:

Gold Hill Historical Society
P. O. Box 26
165 4th St.
Gold Hill, Oregon 97525

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

OFFICERS:

President: 855-1891
Clare Moore
Vice: Pres: 773-4525
Ted Wharton
Secretary:

Treasurer: 855-7729
Winona Nichols

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Newsletter Editor:
Linda Genaw
Newsletter Staff:
Genevieve Heil
Clare Moore
Tom Cushman
Mary Lou Campbell